

## **AUGUST ARTICLE**

### **CONTACT:**

### **IMPROVE YOUR RECYCLING PRACTICES**

Today, 2 out of 4 households recycle on a regular basis in Massachusetts. On average, each resident recycles 2.6 pounds per day – but also discards 4.9 pounds per day, clearly demonstrating that more can be done.

The following responses to frequently asked questions provide helpful information for anyone interested in improving their recycling track record.

#### **What's in it for me?**

Waste reduction practices will save you money. When you use an item to its fullest (or avoid having to use it in the first place) you save the cost of buying/using the item and the potential recycling and disposal costs. It also means municipalities pay less for waste management (lower taxes), and businesses operate more efficiently. Need another reason? Reducing waste saves natural resources and reduces harmful emissions that contribute to global warming and climate change.

#### **How can I do it?**

The ways to reduce household waste are limited only by our awareness and creativity. Two popular practices include backyard composting and reducing unwanted mail. Reducing waste is perhaps best accomplished by practicing smart shopping. Look to buy more durable, less toxic products with limited packaging. And buy only what you need and use what you buy.

Another way to reduce waste is to use common services. For example, use the library for books and borrow tools instead of buying them. Other tips include using old towels, rags and sponges instead of paper towels and cloth napkins rather than paper ones. Purchase canvas grocery bags and rechargeable batteries. Make a difference in your community by learning how to be a better environmental citizen.

#### **Why reuse?**

Many commonly discarded items – from single-sided paper to clothing to cell phones – are readily reusable. Instead of tossing an item in the trash can or recycling bin, consider

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ways it might still be usable to you or others, or whether it can be repaired if needed. Give your discards a chance at a second life by holding a yard sale or donating items to charities.

### **But I already recycle. Isn't that enough?**

Perhaps. But recycling practices have changed and you may need a refresher on the types of products that can be recycled. Did you know that nearly all kinds of paper can be recycled? The old limits on windows, glue, staples, glossy paper and so forth are nonexistent. If you can rip it, you can recycle it. This includes mail, newspapers, magazines, catalogs, thin cardboard packaging, hangtags, brochures, homework papers, files, calendars, phone books, paperback books and shredded paper.

Plastic bottles and jugs only need to be rinsed before recycling. Generally, empty containers that once held food, beverages or cleaning products can be recycled. Ditto for glass and metal food containers. If you are unsure, call [INSERT TOWN INFO].

Recycling is a no-brainer. Keep recycling containers or baskets in strategic locations throughout the home along with ordinary waste baskets. It's easier to toss recyclables in a separate container than it is to rummage through the trash later to separate everything.

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